

Religion.

Islam is, of course, practically exclusively the religion of the Hadhramaut. There are a number of Banians in Mukalla and a few in Shihr, but, apart from these, other faiths are represented only by one or two Christians and possibly Parsees in the same ports. Occasional Memons, Khojas, and Ithnasheries among the Indian population represent the only exceptions to the universal adherence in the Hadhramaut to the Shafite Sunni school. Rumour has it that traces left from the old Ibadhi-ism are still to be found in the north west in Nejran, and there are of course Ibadhis from Oman, eastwards in Dhufar. 162
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CHAPTER VI.

CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN THE HADHRAMAUT.

The report deals with the conditions found in the Hadhramaut and, to some extent at least, peculiar to that country; it assumes a general knowledge of Arabian conditions of life which are common to the whole Peninsula. It may, however, be well in a few remarks to call attention to some general features of tribal life which should be borne in mind. 121

The culture of the Arab is determined by his environment, which also largely affects his religion. In the more fertile wadis the people are settled and conservative, on the barren steppes and desert places they are nomadic and communistic. The Beduin, and indeed many of the settled tribes, are extremely poor; their food is of the simplest, their staples being dates, home-grown millet and other grain, imported rice, and dried fish. The tribesman's wardrobe consists of two or three pieces of cloth, and indigo, in which he has implicit faith as protection alike from sun and cold. His dwelling is poor and its furniture hardly makes a camel's load. There are three things he saves up to acquire—arms (a rifle and *jambiya* or curved dagger), a camel, and a wife. The wife is my own addition; Beduins have often mentioned the other requirements to me, which shows, I suppose, that the wife is either an essential who goes without saying or that she is an afterthought. But these are the only things for which a Beduin saves. In other respects he is thriftless. 105

Poverty affects them in one of two ways: either they raid to augment their scanty means of living or they emigrate and earn their increment in more favourable surroundings abroad. Raiding is a paradox: it is not only a crime against society, but also a recognized means of livelihood. Furthermore, as it is played according to recognized rules it is a national sport. As more and more of the population become settled, raiding tends to become less popular. It is of course a large overstatement to suggest that football and other games will take its place as a sport, but the overstatement does contain some truth, for football is rapidly becoming

643 The Sultan of Lahej rules over the territory of the 'Abdali tribe, and
 425 his frontier marches with the northern frontier of Aden Colony. He is
 descended from a Yafa'i family, who were appointed as Governors of
 Lahej by an Imam of San'a. Later they revolted against the Imams and
 declared their independence. By purchase, Imamic grants and seizure
 they own a considerable portion of the Lahej lands; they are of foreign
 origin to the tribe over which they rule.

The Amirs of Dhala' were appointed Governors of the Dhala' pro-
 vince, including the lands of the tribes of Halumein, Ahmad, Azraq and
 Shu'Ar, by the Imams of San'a, and, later, of the lands of Sha'ib by a
 Sultan of Turkey. I see that the official handbook describes the Amirs of
 Dhala' as descendants from slaves. It is surprising how such obvious in-
 accuracies persist. To see that they have no slave blood in them requires
 527 no more than ordinary eyesight, and it would be impossible for an Imam of
 795 San'a to appoint a slave to any post, since there are no slaves in the Yemen
 144 at all, slavery being forbidden by the tenets of the Zeidi sect. The Amirs
 are of typical Central Yemeni type, such as is found on the Yemen plateau.

643 Later, they rebelled against the Imams and established their independ-
 ence. Thus they rule over a confederation of small tribes, while belong-
 ing to none of them.

These appointed Suzerains, of whom the Sultan of Makalla is one,
 form a distinct class among Arab Chiefs. They do not mix with their
 tribesmen in the usual democratic Arab way, but stand apart, as it were,
 and are addressed by titles of exaggerated respect. Not being tribesmen
 of the tribe they rule, they have no traditional and family holds over the
 people and their attitudes towards their tribesmen are those of foreign rulers.
 They do not, as a rule, favour elected hereditary headmen in their villages,
 but prefer to appoint outsiders as headmen, whom they pay as retainers.

When a Suzerain dies, the election of the new Chief is held by the
 family only and the tribesmen are not consulted.

622 The accepted Suzerains are represented by one example only—the
 792 Sharifs of Beihan. It is, however, an interesting example.

628 In Beihan there are settlements of Sharifs and of Seyyids. There are
 648 also two tribes among whom these holy men live. Both the Sharifs and
 the Seyyids are arms-bearing families, and for some time were divided by
 a feud. Before the Great War, the elected Chief of the Sharifs, a far-
 sighted man called Ahmad, negotiated a treaty of protection and friend-
 ship with Great Britain. In this he gained the support of the lower tribe
 and of half the upper tribe, which was divided by a feud. After the
 Great War he concluded a truce with the Seyyids, and consolidated his
 relationships with his supporters among the tribesmen, who amounted to
 three-quarters of the population of Beihan. They accepted him as
 Suzerain and as their general agent for dealing with their foreign affairs.
 Thus, while he is undoubtedly a Suzerain, he is one of limited authority.
 He does not claim taxes from the land or the trade except in his own
 settlements, and is, consequently, very poor. But, for all that, the influ-
 ence of the Sharifs is considerable in all the Beihan area. Their position
 is not, of course, unique in Arabia, but it is doubtful if any others than
 holy men could find themselves in a similar one.

150 THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBES OF

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567 they are a race apart and are much respected, frequently attaining positions of high rank. A man will trust his slave before his brother. Tribesmen will eat with a slave when the slave has attained a position of eminence, such as governor of a village or commander of a post, but never with a Doshan or with a Heiq. A Chief's responsibility for his slaves is a very real one, and should he sell a slave or part with one he will be considered to have committed a shame. The slaves that I have met in the territory upheld the reputation slaves have always had for loyalty and courage.

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622 We next come to two curious races, the Akhdam and the Hajur. I am satisfied that these are quite separate races, although there are a few instances of intermarriage in the major settlements. Akhdam is the plural of Khadim, which means "servant." This race is of African origin, but I can make no guess at the date at which they came to Arabia. Whenever it was, they appear to have left no relations or traces behind them in Africa. Their main settlement is at Zabid in the Western Yemen. They are of the Shafa'i sect, but practise witchcraft, make phalli and hold snakes and snake-charmers in great respect. In appearance they are small and their skin is a dull dark brown, not a glossy East African black. The only race in the country which will do filthy work, the Akhdam are in great demand and are employed as sweepers. They have their own headman in their small communities, successful wizards appointing themselves to the post without election.

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197 The second foreign race is the Hajur. They appear to be South-west Abyssinians and are very like the Galla. Like the Akhdam, they have long ago lost any linguistic connection with Africa and speak Arabic. 147 They are hardy and well-built and live in grass-hut settlements on the coastal belt between Lahej and Abyan. Some, on occasion, bear arms, 361 but they are on the whole un-warlike and seek casual labour at harvest time. The 'Abdali tribes of Lajeh have intermarried with them to a considerable extent, and for this reason the 'Abdalis are darker than most coast Arabs and many villages in their territory are occupied by settled Hajur. In a few generations the Hajur and the 'Abdali will be indistinguishable, and I think this mingling of the two races must be very recent, and probably began during or just before the Turkish occupation of Lahej in 1916.

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622 East of Aden, for some hundred miles, the coastal fishing communities are of Hajur or mixed Hajur stock. They elect their headmen as the Arabs do and are of the Shafa'i sect, but, like the Akhdam, they incline towards witchcraft and phallic worship. The observant traveller on the Lahej road will see plenty of evidence for this close to their settlements. 715 754 174

It is possible that these two African races came to Arabia during the second and third centuries A.D. as camp-followers to Abyssinian armies. But this is pure conjecture.

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361 Finally, we come to the Jews. Jewish settlements exist all over the Protectorate. The principal settlement is in San'a, and all Jews of South Arabia claim inter-relationship and have many family connections in Palestine. They claim to be descended from the Jews of Kheybar. It is 144 more probable, however, that the original Yemeni Jews are of South Arab race. Before the rise of Islam the people of South-west Arabia were

THE ADEN PROTECTORATE

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earn. An Arab from the Protectorate to whom I said that he and his¹⁸¹ friends seemed to think of nothing but money-making when they came⁵⁷⁷ to Aden replied: "If you will see the country from which we come you will understand the reason." It is a mistake, however, to suppose that a love of gain overrides all other considerations. The Arab, like other people, will do a good deal for money, but there are some things that he will not do. If his honour is affected he will place that first, and he will cling tenaciously to what he regards as right.

The Arabs of the Protectorate are all Moslems, and they have⁷⁹⁵ strong attachment to their faith, but they are not fanatical. They¹⁰² belong to the Shafei sect of Sunnis, and they dislike and distrust their²⁷⁶ neighbours of the Zeidi persuasion in the Yemen. The most virile tribes are the Aulaqis and others to the north-east of Aden, and from them are recruited most of the men for the Aden Protectorate Levies stationed at Aden. In the most western parts of the Protectorate the people are addicted to chewing the mildly intoxicant leaves of a local shrub called *kat*. This habit is alleged to have a deleterious effect on physique and intelligence, but the degree of truth in this imputation is in some doubt.

In some of the coastal districts there is an intermixture of African^[144] blood, due to old importations of slaves. Slavery has long been an⁵⁶⁷ institution in the country, but it is limited to the descendants of imported Africans. Slave trade, fortunately, no longer exists, and efforts to suppress the status of slavery altogether have made some headway. The principal chiefs of districts in which it still exists have agreed to grant freedom to any slave who asks for it. The slaves have not, however, shown much desire to take advantage of this measure, for they are not, on the whole, discontented with their lot. The prevalent form of slavery is a mild one, and it confers privileges as well as exacting duties. The Arabs, for the most part, are kindly masters, and their so-called slaves can often rise to high positions of trust and responsibility. In the Quafiti State they have sometimes become local governors, and they can wield considerable influence.

The genesis of the Aden Protectorate was the desire of the British,⁶⁴⁸ when they occupied Aden in 1839, to guard their new acquisition from⁶³¹ attack on the land side. For this purpose Captain Haines, the first British Resident of Aden, concluded treaties with some of the neighbouring Arab chiefs, the most important of whom was—as he still is—the Abdali Sultan of Lahej. These treaties formed the nucleus from which the Protectorate has gradually grown. During the nineteenth

721 is a case of the neglect, to which you referred, of the Government
648 towards our so-called protected sheikhs.

000 There are one or two rather curious facts in connection with that Commission. The head of the Commission was a Colonel Wahab, a very talented officer. His assistant was a Major Abud. Anyone who understands Arabic will understand the strange coincidence of those two names. When I first made contact with the Turks, they asked me in a puzzled way: "Who are these two men, 'Wahab and Abud?'" They thought that, whereas they had sent some of their most important men, we had sent some local Arabs to deal with them.

You mentioned the frequency of the travel of the tribes of the Protectorate to foreign lands. That was a very striking feature even in those days. It was quite a common thing to meet a half-naked Arab leading a string of camels, who would say: "Bon jour, monsieur."

We had great difficulty in getting a cook there. Our Indian cook went sick, and to our surprise a local Arab turned up from a village in the mountains. We found he talked English with a very Australian accent, and had been an assistant cook in a temperance hotel in Queensland.

Captain ACWORTH: Sir Bernard spoke of the very great religious enthusiasm of the tribes, but he also mentioned a sort of friction between the various tribes, and some of them did not think very highly of the others. I was wondering whether in the very keen Moslem faith in the south of Arabia they have among them the same sort of divergencies and different views that we have in our churches here, like High Church, Modernist, and so on—whether there are really a considerable number of sects among the Moslems.

Then, are the various tribes something like the counties in England—say, Lancashire and Cornwall? Can they all understand each other? Those two points I have always wondered about.

795 Sir BERNARD REILLY: The division I spoke of was between the Shafeis and the Zeidis. The Shafeis belong to the great Sunni Division of the Moslem faith. The Zeidis are more akin to the Shiah, though they are not precisely Shiah. They take their name from the founder of their sect, named Zeid, but they have more in common with the Shiah than the Shafeis have.

I do not think it would be right to say there are many subdivisions in the Aden Protectorate. The people of the Protectorate are all Shafeis, and there are no serious divisions among them from a religious point of view at all.



sequently return to their home settlements with their savings. Arabic is the language of the indigenous peoples, but Malay tongues are widely used in the towns of the Hadhramaut. Swahili, the *franca lingua* of East Africa, is understood throughout most of the area, while English is extensively employed in Aden proper. The majority of Arabs are Moslems, belonging to branches of the Sunni sect. Other religions are found chiefly among the different racial groups in the Colony and in the coast towns of the Protectorate.

Education has made considerable progress in the Colony, and is gradually being introduced into the Protectorate. Primary schools for both sexes are supported by the government in the Colony, and by mission and private organizations. The Colonial authorities also operate secondary and vocational schools for boys. There are no post-secondary institutions, but government scholarships are available for the training of teachers and various professional personnel in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan or in the United Kingdom. The literacy rate among children of 6 to 12 years of age is estimated at 90 per cent, in contrast with 70 to 25 per cent in the general population. A program for the expansion of education

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iciency are widespread. Pellagroid lesions of the skin are often encountered among the peoples of the Protectorate. In a survey of 518 Arab schoolboys in Aden township in 1949, no cases of overt deficiency were found, but enlargement of the liver, possibly suggestive of low protein intake, was revealed in 27 per cent.

MISCELLANEOUS CONDITIONS

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A small outbreak of epidemic muscular rheumatism, classified as Bornholm disease, was reported from Aden in 1946. It involved 35 persons—34 British and 1 Arab.

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Hepatic cirrhosis is one of the most frequent conditions seen at the Civil Hospital. Local physicians have noted that most of the cases come from malarious regions where qat is widely used, but the underlying causes have not been investigated.

Chewing the leaves of *Catha edulis*, or qat, is a general custom in Western Aden Protectorate. The leaf juices contain a stimulant, and habitual indulgence is said to produce loss of appetite, sleeplessness and a variety of more serious nervous disorders. Local observers believe that addiction to the drug contributes to the widespread under-nutrition among the people.

SUMMARY

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The Colony of Aden and the adjacent Protectorate, on the southern coast of Arabia, have been British dependencies for over a century. The population of the Colony, including the port of Aden, was enumerated at 80,516 in the census of 1946, and calculated at over 100,000 in 1950. The Protectorate territory comprises two administrative divisions—Western Aden Protectorate and Eastern Aden Protectorate, in which the estimated population for 1948 was about 350,000 and 300,000, respectively. The local governments are tribal and diverse in organization, ranging from sultanates to smaller autonomous units. The inhabitants of both the Colony and the Protectorate are predominantly Arabs and adherents of Islam.